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Title:

Speech opening Riverland Harvest Festival, Waikerie

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Mr. Jennings, Your Worship, ladies and gentlemen :

Thank you very much for inviting me to launch this first Riverland Harvest Festival.

It's a distinctive addition to the by now very extensive range of Festivals provided for tourists in South Australia.

And I think it's all the more valuable for being organised on a regional basis: for real success in tourism in our situation is undoubtedly contingent on a regional approach, rather than one of competing neighbouring towns.

This is why I'm delighted to see that the people of Waikerie, Loxton, Renmark and the other towns have got together and co-ordinated events to cover the whole region.

I'm sure that it will pay off handsomely.

I was particularly anxious to be with you for this opening - in fact I got up in Canberra at 5.30 this morning to make it.

For a start I'm always glad of any opportunity to revisit the Riverland.

Secondly I wanted to give what help I could to get the Festival off to a good start.

When - and it's years ago now - I started to enthuse about the potential of tourism for the South Australian economy I got a fairly frosty reception.

The knockers came out in force; remarks like "it won't work", "who'd want to come here?", "it's too seasonal" and so on abounded.

Abounded, that is, except in the Riverland. People here were enthusiastic. They saw what could be done, they appreciated that the future of the river towns could well depend on success and they went hammer and tongs to achieve success.

It's been a real pleasure to work with the various tourism bodies, the councils and the people in this area to develop and promote tourism here.

We're having great success now on a Statewide scale and I'm often amused to find the very people who were knockers a few years back preaching to the Government about the merits of tourism as a benign, rapid growth

industry with high employment.

I'm also delighted to see it because there's still a lot that can be done and we need all the enthusiasm, hard work and hard cash investment we can get.

In the Riverland I think we're now moving into Phase Two of our tourism development.

The First Phase was creating the necessary infrastructure of transport, accommodation, catering and the like, pushing town and city beautification schemes and ensuring through proper legislation and regulation that we did everything in our power to keep the Murray pure and beautiful.

(I might add here that while we can do a lot ourselves, as a South Australian at the end of the river I'd like to see still more done in Victoria and New South Wales).

That was Phase One and in it the State Government gave its priority to infrastructure development.

There's still work to be done, of course, but I think take-off point was reached - in Walkerie - with the holding the world gliding championships. They really gave us international attention.

Phase Two - which is now underway - is to promote and sell what we've got here - that special Riverland flavour for relaxed, refreshing holidays that blend superb fruit and wines, sunshine, pioneering history and the delicate, haunting beauty of the river scenery.

I repeat here that success depends on selling the region as a package and the State Government is going all out to help you to do so.

Some of you may have seen the new series of twelve tourism posters of South Australia commissioned from leading artists and photographers now being used to get our story across interstate and overseas.

You may also have noticed that the Riverland is the only region to be the subject of two of them - a measure of the importance of it and the potential we believe it offers.

In addition, the Tourist Bureau is now preparing a lavish, full colour brochure describing what the Riverland offers. We're not stinting on cost to ensure we get the best product possible and we're planning to

print 50,000 to get the message over throughout Australia and overseas.

In addition, the South Australian Film Corporation, at the Bureau's instigation, is to produce a tourism documentary on the river to be used to sell holidays here. Filming should start in the spring.

These special projects are being backed by a sustained advertising and publicity programme designed to get tourist dollars into this area and to give people jobs so they can continue to live in what I think is one of the most pleasant environments in the world.

Once again thank you for asking me here, my congratulations on the way this Festival has been organised and is now being presented.

I'm sure that participants and visitors alike are going to have a lot of fun and that it will be of great benefit to the Riverland as a whole.

I hope, too, that it's the first of many and I have very much pleasure in officially declaring it open.

Thank You.

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SPEECH BY THE PREMIER, MR. DUNSTAN, OPENING RIVERLAND HARVEST
FESTIVAL. WAIKERIE. 7.3.75

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